

ReZero Extra: Oni and Happiness

Speaker Color Code: Subaru, Rem, Rigel, Misc.

“N-no way... is this for real...!?”

Amongst the crowded plaza, Subaru raises his voice in disbelief. Eyes rife with excitement, he can't help but make a scene. In his line of sight was a single market stall. ---The brown-clothed shopkeep handling it widens his eyes at Subaru's sudden overreaction.

But Subaru, overwhelmed, doesn't even notice the shocked shopkeep. Lips trembling with excitement, he even neglects to wipe the sweat dripping from his forehead, causing Subaru to taste some oddly bitter “saliva.” Caught like a deer in headlights, Subaru's feet stop squarely in front of the stall.

“Hey, what's the matter, standing around like a mook all of a sudden? If we don't get home soon you'll end up buying some useless crap again.”

The child walking ahead grimaces as he reluctantly stops for Subaru.

Folding his arms behind his head, the boy's sharp, dagger-like stare makes his displeasure seem very obvious.

And yet, while his leering suggests he's out to kill, Subaru knew he wasn't necessarily in a bad mood. After all, Subaru, with his

own set of sharp eyes, was practically a veteran in accidentally scaring off strangers.

“[Live strong...]”

“What the hell are you suddenly pitying me for! Ah, *wait wait wait!* I *don't* wanna hear it! I know it's just gonna depress me! Don't tell me! I said don't *tell* me goddamnit!”

“Seeing you all worked up like this, I'm really looking forward to the future. Really, you're the best for bullying like this. You might seriously be a prodigy. Blessed by the very Gods with this *divine gift*.”

“Like *hell* I want a gift like that! If the Gods have the time to be giving out useless crap, then at least give me something more useful damnit!”

The boy shouts back at Subaru's taunts, his face twisted fiercely. ---The boy with short blue hair looks up to the sky as if grieving. Subaru merely nods at his usual overreaction, then proceeds to face the shopkeep who had been watching their useless banter with a blank face.

“Hey, how much are these?”

“H-huh?”

Subaru grins mischievously at the shopkeep who was obviously taken aback. Subaru's evil glare and exposed teeth puts a lump in the shopkeep's throat as he tries his best not to shriek. Although considering the exchange just then, his own reaction seemed rather trivial.

Subaru clears his throat and points at a particular item in the stall.

"I want these. Give me some. I'll take, say, three bags of them."

"Y-yes! Thanks for ya patronage!"

"Hey! Wait, wait a sec! What the heck are you buying all of a sudden... if we buy unnecessary stuff on the way home, we won't just be wasting money, we'll be punished within an inch of our lives!"

The second the shopkeep accepts Subaru's purchase, the boy's face fills with fear. He pulls sheepishly on the hem of Subaru's coat, practically begging him to reconsider. Taking hold of his hand, Subaru crouches to the boy's eye level and reassures him,

"Don't worry, I'm not using any of our shopping money. This'll come out of my own personal pocket money. It's my hard-earned allowance that I've slowly, slowly been saving up. I'm sure you know how restrictive I am about using it."

"Uh huh, yeah, well... you don't spend on alcohol or smokes, so that just leaves... I guess splurging it all on women?"

“Hey, you’re definitely trying for a serious misunderstanding here, aren’t you. Who the hell did you get this awful personality from, huh? I’d really like to know-”

“I’m pretty much certain it’s hereditary. Sadly.”

Subaru shakes his head with grief at the boy’s callous declaration. As he brandishes the Bird with his left hand, Subaru grabs the exposed finger by the joint, and the boy mutters a short “Ah” before wailing in pain.

As these two carry on, the shopkeep dutifully fills the bags and gives a brief, nervous laugh.

“You boys sure are friendly. Whatcha, father and son?”

“Hey, hey, after all that, you really think he’s my son... man, merchants sure have some *useless* eyes. What do you think Rigel?”

“After looking at our faces, it’d be harder *not* to figure it out!”

Still locked in a death grip, Rigel shouts rebelliously against the pain. Hearing that, Subaru admits defeat with a casual “Well, I guess that’s true.”

At that point, the bagging was finished. The shopkeep brings forward three small sacks while Subaru pulls out the pouch holding his allowance.

“Alright, how many Yen will that be?”

“Dunno what ‘Yen’ ya talkin’ ‘bout, all togetha it be sixteen coppers.”

“Hm, then three silvers should do. ---I don’t need the change. Keep it.”

“Shoot! Generous ain’tcha! I’ll take ya up on it. Thanks.”

The shopkeep makes big, dramatic gestures as he happily accepts the silvers. Watching the exchange and their carefree smiles, Rigel grimaces. Between Subaru’s Death Grip and the fact they were giving up the change, it was obvious that Rigel was upset.

“Don’t worry, it’s all good. Today I got a hold of something really nostalgic. Just consider it a bonus for bringing me a little excitement. Besides, being too stingy will get you punished someday.”

“...Excitement and nostalgia, what are you even talking about.”

Rising up, Rigel, while still clearly discontent, asks curiously about the purchase. In response, Subaru ruffles his short hair with full force. “GUAAAAHH”, Rigel roars with further discontent.

“It’s got a little something to do with the Missus. It reminds me of an old custom from my hometown,”

Subaru replies, a mischievous smile emerging on his face.

“---and so, you two somehow ended up spending *how much?*”

The blue-haired maiden sighs lightly at Subaru's explanation. The second Subaru and Rigel had returned, she came out to welcome them both home. She apparently came from the kitchen, as her white apron had faintly wet splotches, showing where she had hurriedly dried her hands.

In his spare time, Subaru covered her apron with decorative patches and embroidery. Seeing the wet splotches all a careful distance from his handiwork, Subaru is struck with a surprise attack of embarrassing affection.

“Geez, what are you laughing about. Rem still hasn't received a satisfying answer.”

Without really thinking, Subaru's face loosens at the sight of her ---yet, the long, blue-haired Rem was thoroughly upset. Looking ready to dish out a frightening punishment, she lays her eyes on Rigel who stands beside Subaru.

“Rigel too. You *know* your father is erratic like this. If *you* don't keep it together, what is Rem to do?”

“Yes, I’m incredibly sorry for.... *wait* a sec, this is just weird. Even if I calm down and think carefully it’s *still* just plain weird!? Why is the child being scolded for his careless parent? Isn’t it supposed to be the other way around?”

“Wait a minute, Rigel. Take a deep breath, now exhaaaale.... yeah like that, *sloooowly*. Repeat that five more times, and make sure to close your eyes. One, two, three... yeah, there you go. Have you calmed down? Yup, you’re calm now. Alright so now that you’re calm, go ahead and apologize to your mother...”

“I freakin’ meditated till I hit my Zen state and reflected on my actions, but I still don’t see how I’ve done *anything* wrong!!”

Rather than calm down, Rigel goes red in the face with anger, raging toward his room. “Rigel!”, Rem calls out his name as he rushes past her, but he keeps moving. Or so it seems until he had run up to the end of the corridor.

“...what?”

Rigel’s feet stop. Despite everything else, Rigel always listens to what his parents had to say to the very end. Rem, fully aware that Rigel would stop for him, carries on with her usual cool demeanor,

“Snacks have been prepared for you up in your room, so please have them after washing up. And don’t forget to let Spica know you’re home.”

“...got it. Thanks for the food.”

As part of Subaru and Rem’s lessons on mannerisms, it was an ironclad law in the Natsuki household to say “Thanks for the food” before meals. No matter how frustrated or rebellious he was, Rigel would always remember this rule. Seeing the rare child in him, the couple looked toward him with fond eyes.

In an act of petty rebellion, however, Rigel still slams the door as he heads upstairs. Rem turns back toward Subaru.

“Do you, do you think we teased him a bit too much?”

“Nah, in terms of mother-and-son conversations, that was par for the course. Even though he acts like that, at his core, he at least doesn’t hate it. That brat, he really is just like how I was as a kid. I can basically see right through him.”

Subaru affectionately pets Rem, comforting her as he removes his shoes and enters his home. He collects the day’s purchases that Rigel had tossed haphazardly (though in reality, he let it prop up against the wall so it wouldn’t fall over) and, practically by habit, Subaru walks side by side with Rem to the living room. As he props the three small bags onto the table alongside the groceries, Rem sneaks a peek at their contents.

“They really are... *completely* normal beans.”

“Yeah, that they are. What, did you think when I said “beans,” I was somehow hinting something more *naughty* and *erotic*? Man,

my dear wife might seem calm and level-headed, but she's actually pretty *active* and aggressive afterall."

"Rem simply doesn't hesitate with giving and receiving love. Furthermore, when it comes to embarrassing displays of affection, Rem thinks Subaru-kun is just as guilty."

"Oh? When has a **SHY** and **NAIVE**-natured **NICE GUY** such as myself ever done something so shameless?"

As Subaru poses flamboyantly, his chin on his fist and exposed white teeth flashing a smile, Rem briefly gazes at him with a charmed yet somewhat dumbfounded face. With her face still red with embarrassment, she averts her eyes,

"W-when we celebrated our anniversary, Subaru-kun bought a *huge* number of bouquets, and for Rem's birthday Subaru-kun and Rigel put up decorations *all* over the house, and when Spica was born, Subaru-kun convinced the townsfolk to hold an entire *parade*.... Subaru-kun always spends way too much on other people."

"I use my allowance to make my wife and family happy. Isn't that basically spending for myself? In the end, I'm spending my allowance for the sake of my own **HAPPY LIFE** aren't I?"

"-----!"

Subaru's earnest answer paints Rem's white face red with shyness and embarrassment. The sudden wave of emotions is too much for Rem, as happy tears faintly well. Raising her face, Rem quickly grabs Subaru's sleeve to mop her moist eyes. Her sudden movements surprise Subaru. He lets out a small "Uwah!" as he loses his balance. Rem stands on her toes to support his weight, facing him as if there just to catch him.

"-----"

"...What's up with you all of a sudden?"

And then for a brief moment, they let their lips meet, their tongues entangled in a sweet embrace before finally parting.

Subaru's heart beats feverously after Rem's sudden display of affection, but he somehow manages a facade of calmness on his face. After savoring his tongue with her soft, sweet lips, Rem, with a faintly sensual look on her face, answers,

"Subaru-kun... is the one at fault here. Saying such embarrassing things so suddenly like that."

"Did I really say something that embarrassing?"

"Subaru-kun doesn't realize how much his words and actions affect Rem. Subaru-kun should be more careful. ----Rem doesn't mind if it's at home, but if Subaru-kun does this to Rem outside, Rem will be troubled."

As a blushing Rem mutters back sheepishly, Subaru's facade of calmness and his very last threads of reason seem ready to snap. Subaru anxiously sneaks a glance at his wife. He definitely wasn't alone in his hot, unsteady breathing. As the atmosphere between the two lovers reaches a boiling point,

“-----AAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!”

“Whoa!! Spica's crying---! Someone! *Anyone*---! *HEELP*--!!”

The cries of their beloved son and daughter shook the house like a small tremor.

Subaru and Rem look each other in the face, and then automatically dash off. Without even a word, the two take each other's hands as they rush over to their crying baby daughter.

“By the way, what were those beans for? Subaru-kun said they were for an old custom from his hometown...”

“Oh yeah, did I not say?”

With Rem wrapped around his arm and her weight pleasantly pressing against him, Subaru casually answers with an innocent laugh,

“---So back in my hometown, there was this tradition where we'd throw beans at bad Oni to get rid of them, you see.”

---At that moment, the bright smile Rem had shown Subaru seemed to freeze in shock.

“You got it all wrong! Completely, utterly wrong! That wasn’t my intention at all, I swear!”

“He’s horrible isn’t he, Spica. Your father, oh it must be that your father has come to hate your mother. If not, then why in the world would he buy beans for getting rid of Oni... It must be some roundabout way of telling Rem something. To Subaru-kun, Rem is just, *Rem is just-*”

“There’s *no way* that’s true! If someone asked me to choose between Rem and Rigel, I wouldn’t hesitate for even a *second* to choose Rem!”

“You shitty Dad!!”

The family of four makes a huge commotion, its members chasing after each other in circles around the room. In the lead, a sulking Rem cradles Spica in her arms and traces circles, cheeks puffed to their max. Second in line, Subaru desperately chases after her, apologizing profusely. And at the end of the pack, Rigel, who isn’t heartless enough to leave outright, yells after Subaru with his face twisted in anger.

“Wait I get it, stop for a second! I’ll admit that what I just said wasn’t quite right. Okay so, if someone asked me to choose between Rem and Rigel, I’ll hesitate for a little while and *then* choose Rem!”

“It’s not about how long you took to get to that decision goddamnit! Don’t get me involved in your lover’s quarrels!”

“Rigel, what kind of language are you using against your father. Also, if you keep angrily thrashing about, Spica will start crying again. Please keep quiet.”

“I don’t want to hear that from the angriest person in this house right now!”

Rigel continues to roar rebelliously. At once, Subaru and Rem both put a finger to their lips and make a “Shhh” sound. Mortified, Rigel drops out of their absurd chase.

The remaining two, Subaru and Rem, seem to chase after each other’s backs endlessly, circling around an agitated Rigel sitting in the middle.

“[Chasing out Oni] was just an expression. Back in my hometown they were, let’s see... Oni were sort of like a collection of bad things. Things like disease and poverty and unpopularity were all bundled together and called [Oni]. The bean tossing was a tradition for getting rid of those bad things, so it’s not like we were antagonizing *actual* Oni.”

“Horrible, you’re just *horrible*. Subaru-kun, you even once said things like being ‘fanatical like an Oni,’ and ‘I love Oni’ just to woo Rem.... It seems that Subaru-kun has completely forgotten the feelings from that time.”

“I’m telling you that’s not true!”

With that final retort, Subaru suddenly stops and turns around. Having not expected their circular chase to suddenly end, Rem falls into Subaru’s breast with a startled look. Bringing her face even further into his breast, Subaru uses both arms to grab her in a bear hug, preventing Rem’s escape.

“Forgetting my feelings for you? That’s just plain impossible. Rem, you’re my number one favorite person in the entire world. Don’t tell me you forgot that?”

“Su, Subaru-kun...”

Feeling his passionate gaze on her, Rem’s eyes soon grow moist. It has been nine whole years since the first time the two had met. In that time, Rem became a mother, and the young weakness in her was shed away, revealing the fortitude of a strong woman. And yet, when she falls into Subaru’s arms like this, Rem can’t help but revert to that time long ago when she was brimming with love and longing for him.

Embarrassed with herself, Rem closes her eyes as a sweet sensation tickles her lips.

“Subaru-kun..... ----oh yes, Rigel. Please take Spica for your mother.”

“Err, uhh, yeah okay.”

“----Subaru-kun.”

Between Subaru and Rem, Spica had been experiencing a rather claustrophobic situation. Now with both hands free, Rem flings them towards Subaru’s chest and rubs her soft cheeks against him.

“In Subaru-kun’s eyes, is Rem still Subaru-kun’s number one favorite person?”

“Is that even a question? I wouldn’t even be *exaggerating* if I said that half my entire existence was my love for Rem and the other half was my devotion for Rem.”

“Geez, Subaru-kun is always spouting such nonsense...”

Embracing each other, Subaru and Rem exchange their deepest feelings.

Witnessing the scene of his parents making up, Rigel deftly plugs Spica’s ears,

“----WHAT A FAAAAAAAARRCE!!”

Rigel screams with the force and strength of his entire body.

“Hmm, the Bean-tossing festival... Rem has never heard of such a tradition.”

“Well I guess around here that’s gotta be the case. To be honest, I can’t seem to match the local calendar with my hometown’s, so I’m not actually sure when it even *is* around here...”

To properly celebrate the festival, they would have wanted to wait until February 3rd. But, while this world had the same four seasons, and a year was even the same 365 days, the names of the months were so outrageously different that, even after nine whole years, Subaru still couldn’t figure out which was February. All he knew was that since it was mildly cold out, it had to be somewhere between January and March.

“Anyway, without further ado, let’s get the Bean-Tossing Festival started! Oh, but rather than chase away actual Oni, we’ll be chasing away all the bad stuff that gets *referred* to as Oni. Let’s do it for our family’s future happiness!”

“Well, Subaru-kun says that, but three out of our family *are* actual Oni...”

With the inkling of a bitter smile on her face, Rem protrudes a single white horn from her forehead, appealing for the Oni.

Just as Rem said, Rigel and Spica are indeed half-Oni. Having inherited Oni blood, horns have even sprouted on their foreheads. Rigel can consciously bring his out, while Spica's tiny horn occasionally emerges from her particularly enthusiastic crying.

As the four sit in a circle for their family meeting, Subaru can feel a lack of enthusiasm in his Oni family members. Dismayed, he tries for a diversion,

“TEI-!”

“Ahn!”

Subaru extends his hand toward Rem's horn, gently rolling his fingers about the white protrusion. While the structure of the horn was quite rigid, its surface was surprisingly lukewarm and smooth to the touch. And above all else, apparently the horn was a sensitive spot of sorts. As Subaru's fingers play with Rem's horn,

“Ahn, mngh.... wa-, wait, *Subaru-kun*.... the children, they're still, they're *watching*.... uu~”

“You'd be a little more convincing if you weren't snuggling up to me right now....”

As Rem lovingly brings her body towards Subaru's, she feels more reminiscent of a small, affectionate animal than a sexy housewife. Subaru brings Rem to his lap as he continues petting her horn. Turning to Rigel,

“Hey Rigel, what do *you* think?”

“Aside from ‘You normies should just go explode!’? Well, I dunno but... Dad, I don’t really get why you wanna do this so badly.”

Rigel glares harshly at Subaru as he comforts Spica in his arms. To his son’s criticism, Subaru gives an audible “Heh” and makes big, exaggerated nods.

“The reason’s very simple actually. This is really the only holiday about Oni I could think of. Also, I didn’t mention it before, but there’s a bit more to this festival. As we chase away the bad things we call [Oni], we’ll also be inviting happiness into our home. Basically, it’s a sort of ritual where we do away with the bad while praying for a safe, happy future.”

At that point, Rem had curled up into a ball on Subaru’s lap. While softly stroking her small back, Subaru points his finger upward,

“To Natsuki Subaru, family is the most important thing in the world. And the fact that we have ties with Oni isn’t something I can or *want* to ignore.... Besides, it’s not like Oni have to always be antagonized.”

“....meaning?”

“Technically we’re supposed to say ‘Out with the Oni! In with fortune!’ while we throw beans around. But lately it’s been popular to bring both Oni *and* fortune into the household.”

“That’s just putting the cart before the horse! Bringing in good *and* bad things, what happened to the stuff from earlier?”

“The way of thinking must have changed. And I don’t think it’s really a bad thing either.”

Subaru explains as his fingers gently trail through Rem’s long hair. Rem’s back faintly quivers at the ticklish sensation, melting Subaru’s gruff face into a fond smile.

“Chasing them out because they’re Oni is just unreasonable. After all, it might just be possible to befriend an Oni. And then do erotic things with an Oni, and then marry an Oni, and then build a loving family with an Oni. Yeah, somehow, I think they’re all possible.”

“

“If the world changed its way of thinking like that, I think it’d be great. I’ve always really liked Oni, and now my *wife* is an Oni, so I’m in paradise! Maybe people have started accepting the good with the bad, and this change in the Oni’s treatment reflects that.”

Just as good and bad fluctuates in the world and day-to-day life, perhaps the way people feel about Oni is changing.

Some even declare Oni as “*moe*” characters. Having experienced Oni firsthand, Subaru knows them better than anyone. In his mind, there isn’t even a shred of doubt. His wife is the cutest.

“In with the Oni! In with fortune too!”

“Say what?”

“‘In with the Oni! In with fortune too!’ Let’s bring them both in! To me, Oni and fortune are both signs of happiness. Being a bit greedy and going for both.... how’s that sound?”

Seeing Subaru shrug casually, Rigel shapes his mouth to say something back, but eventually couldn’t find anything to say and slinks back down.

As Subaru laughs at his son’s speechlessness, a smiling Rem, still nestled in his lap, giggles with a “fufufu~” sound.

“That peculiar way Subaru-kun thinks, Rem loves it. ---Let’s do it, the Bean Tossing Festival.”

“Oh, finally up for it it I see. Alright, let’s strike while the iron’s hot. Maybe after this we can share the Festival with everyone else too.”

Rem tilts her face toward Subaru as he lifts her up. She gives him a puzzled look, to which Subaru answers,

“You know, like back when I showed the kids how to play freeze tag, and it spread like wildfire. Kararagi just feels kind of intimate and familiar. I always get the feeling it’s just like my old hometown.”

“Subaru-kun does say that occasionally. Is the feeling really that strong?”

“I said it a few times without really thinking much of it, but the villages here also elect their leaders by popular vote.... or something like that. And there are even holidays just like April Fools and Christmas.”

“Because having many events and holidays keeps things exciting and interesting... Rem thinks.”

“That’s definitely part of it, but I feel like there’s also more to it than that... well, it doesn’t really matter right now.”

Kararagi was undeniably a wondrous place to live. Together with Rem, it has been nine years since they immigrated here. Indeed, without the flood of support and kindness from its inhabitants, Subaru and Rem could not possibly have done as well as they did.

Even now though, they still had their difficulties with the tricky Kararagi dialect, which was reminiscent of Kansai dialect.

“Hey, I brought the beans. If we’re doing this, let’s get it over with already.”

“Aha, finally coming around are you, my son. Even though you were being all negative earlier, deep inside you just couldn’t help getting all crazy and excited. Wow, Rigel’s *suuuch a kiid~*”

“I’m still better than a stupid dad who worries his wife and kids to death!”

Rigel roughly forces a bag into both Subaru and Rem’s hands, keeping one for himself.

Now facing each other, the two Oni look toward Subaru for what to do next. Nodding, he stuffs his hand into the bag and pulls out a single bean.

“It’s simple. Just chant ‘Out with the Oni! In with fortune!’. Well, except we’ll be bringing the Oni in. Yeah, let’s do that instead.”

“Umm, so the beans.... does Rem throw them at the Oni?”

“Umm, Mom? That violent look you’re giving your son is genuinely terrifying him!”

“Well technically, but don’t do it so seriously, alright? Actually, *please* be gentle.”

After ensuring everything was set, the Bean Tossing Festival ---begins.

Facing off against each other, a bean in each hand,

“Alright, take that! In with the Oni! In with fortune!”

“Umm.... i, in with the Oni! In with fortune!”

“In with the-, hey wait, Spica don’t cry! I said *don’t* cry! Hey, stop for a sec-, wai-, STOP WITH THE BEANS!”

Back and forth, the room is filled with such exchanges as beans fly chaotically all over.

Subaru bears a refreshing energy and gusto. Rem, who felt embarrassed at first, quickly casts off her shame and laughs innocently. Rigel, who for some reason bore the fatal handicap of handling Spica, fights against an almost desperate struggle.

“Yeah! In with the Oni! In with fortune!”

With the Oni themselves as family, and a home filled to the brim with happiness, this is the way the Natsuki household celebrates the Bean Tossing Festival.

With a loving Oni wife by his side and yet more Oni as children, Subaru enjoys a truly new form of the Festival with his precious family.

This is just bliss, he thought.

Rogue beans scatter about the room, the corridor, all over the house. Just thinking about the ensuing cleanup would put a serious damper on the soul. ----But anyone moping about cleanup instead of enjoying this chaotic moment wouldn’t be quite right in the head.

They laugh, and laugh, and laugh some more as beans shoot across the room.

For the sake of being together with the beloved Oni, and for the sake of everlasting happiness, they toss beans.

“Subaru-kun”

Before he realized it, Rem’s face had closed in on Subaru. As Subaru drops his gaze towards her, Rem approaches him, her flushed face showing him a brimming smile.

“Today and every day from now on, will Subaru-kun please happily embrace both Rem *and* fortune?”

Saying that, Rem jumps into his open arms. Subaru hugs her in turn as he replies,

“---I told you didn’t I? Building a future together, hand-in-hand with an Oni, that’s always, *a/ways* been my life-long dream.”

With the happiness of this moment, as well as the promised happiness of tomorrow, unshakably rooted in his heart, Subaru whispers back his reply with a limitless passion.

“....Damn, he sure just does whatever he feels like.”

“Adaaa---”

“What, you’re hungry? But no, you can’t eat them. Dad said you’re supposed to eat your age in beans. Spica’s not even 1 yet, and you don’t even have teeth to eat them with anyway. I’ll eat them in your place.”

“Udaaa---”

“Don’t look so sour.... you know, when you make that face, you look just like how Mom does when she’s sulking to Dad. Damn, once Spica starts walking around and stuff, I’m not looking forward to my place in the family hierarchy.”

“Au, baa---?”

“Go back inside? Don’t talk crazy, we can’t go back right now. All that stuff about bean tossing and the Festival, and after trying to look cool in front of Mom, they’re *definitely* still flirting around in there. ‘Out with the Oni!’ my ass. I bet he just wanted *me* out so he could flirt to his heart’s content.”

“Aau! Aaah, adaaa---!”

“What, are you backing him up too? First with Mom, now with Spica, does Dad emit some sort of Oni-attracting pheromone or something? I don’t believe this shit.”

“Aah---? Ada, adauuu---. Uuu---”

“Huh? Why are you petting my cheek like you’re trying to comfort me? No, you got it all wrong, it’s not like I *like* Dad or anything. Even among the Oni, even among the *outsiders* of the Oni, I’m *still* an outsider. It wouldn’t phase me even if all the Oni in the *world* fell for him. I’d *still* be a member of the Anti-Shitty Dad faction.”

“Aahh--- buaaa---”

“Agh, damn! Screw this! C’mon, we’re going Spica. I figure if we take a short walk around the neighborhood, even *those* two will eventually finish their flirting. And I’m saying this now, but it’s not like I’m doing this to give them some time for themselves.... I TOLD YOU THAT’S NOT IT!”

“Aadaa! Aadaa!”

“Ahhh, damnnit.”

“----The weather sure is nice today.”